

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 00850 171256Z
ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 0850

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC, IN, US
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER DESAI TO THE PRESIDENT

FOREIGN SECRETARY GAVE ME THIS AFTERNOON A COPY OF LETTER
DATED JANUARY 9 TO THE PRESIDENT FROM PRIME MINISTER DESAI
WHICH IS PRESUMABLY BEING TRANSMITTED BY AMBASSADOR PALKHIVALA.

TEXT FOLLOWS:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I WAS TOUCHED BY YOUR MESSAGE OF THE 3RD JANUARY,
WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED TO ME BY AMBASSADOR GOHEEN. I
APPRECIATE THE GENEROUS SENTIMENTS WHICH YOU HAVE EXPRESSED
ABOUT YOUR VISIT TO DELHI WHICH, ALAS* WAS ONLY TOO SHORT.
I GREATLY VALUED THE OPPORTUNITY IT GAVE ME TO GET TO KNOW
YOU. OUR CONVERSATIONS ONLY CONFIRMED THE INSTINCTIVE FEELING
I HAD FELT AFTER OUR CORRESPONDENCE THAT, THOUGH WE ARE
SERVING IN COUNTRIES AND CIRCUMSTANCES FAR APART, BOTH OF
US ARE SUSTAINED BY SIMILAR PRINCIPLES AND GOALS IN OUR
INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC LIFE.

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT WE,
IN INDIA - THE PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE GOVERNMENT - WERE
GREATLY STRUCK BY YOUR PERSONALITY, AND THE SINCERITY OF
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YOUR DEDICATION TO FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF HUMANITY AND
MORAL PURPOSES IN YOUR APPROACH TO ALL PROBLEMS. WE FELT
THAT YOU TOO SHARED THE MESSAGE OF THE MAHATMA THAT OUR
PURPOSES CAN ONLY BE TRULY NOBLE IF THEY ARE STEELED WITH
THE PURITY OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUS MEANS IN PURSUING THEM.
YOUR SPEECHES AND NOTABLY YOUR ADDRESS IN OUR PARLIAMENT
DEEPLY MOVED US AND GAVE US A FEELING OF SHARED FAITH IN

DEMOCRACY, THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS TO FREEDOM AND JUSTICE AND YOUR VISION OF A WORLD AT PEACE WHERE NATIONS CAN WORK IN COOPERATION WITH EACH OTHER. YOUR VISIT HAS PLACED OUR RELATIONSHIP ON A FIRMER FOOTING AND PROMISES TO SPUR OUR COOPERATION TO GROW IN DEPTH AND SCOPE. TO MY MIND, WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING A BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING ANY DIFFERENCES IN OUR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL VIEWPOINTS, THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY DAMAGE IN THE FUTURE TO OUR MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND THE FABRIC OF OUR FRIENDSHIP.

THE DECLARATION WHICH WE SIGNED WAS UNIQUE IN ITS CHARACTER. WHILE RECOGNISING THE RIGHT OF EACH NATION TO CHOOSE ITS OWN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM, WE PUBLICLY AFFIRMED OUR NATIONAL DEDICATION TO THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND THAT OUR PURPOSES WERE TO SAFEGUARD PEACE, PROMOTE A MORE JUST AND STABLE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM, AND TO SERVE THE ENLIGHTENED INTEREST OF ALL MANKIND. THESE PURPOSES ARE UNEXCEPTIONAL BUT IT IS NOT WITHOUT CIRCUMSTANCES AND POLICY COMPULSIONS, COULD JOIN IN MAKING SUCH A DECLARATION AND ESPECIALLY IN AFFIRMING THAT NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS MUST WEIGH THEIR ACTIONS WITH A SENSE OF FULL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ALL THEIR IMPLICATIONS. I BELIEVE THAT THE DECLARATION IN ITS BROAD PRINCIPLES HAS RELEVANCE NOW AND A HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE WORLD AND THE FUTURE.

THE DIFFERENCE WHICH WE HAVE AT PRESENT ON THE NUCLEAR
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QUESTION (AND WHICH UNFORTUNATELY GOT PUBLICISED IN AN UNFORESEEN MANNER) DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE BROAD IDENTITY OF OUR GOALS OR THE BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. EVEN HERE, AS I MADE CLEAR, WE SHARE THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTING THE DANGERS OF WAR FROM THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WE HAVE ALSO AGREED THAT WE MUST WORK TOWARDS ELIMINATING THE THREAT ARISING FROM THE EXISTENCE OF THESE TERRIBLE INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION. INDIA WOULD LIKE THE PURSUIT OF THIS GOAL - OF MAKING THE WORLD FREE FROM THE SPECTRE OF NUCLEAR WAR BY ACCIDENT OR IRRESPONSIBILITY - TO BE CONSIDERED AS A UNIVERSAL AND NOT A RESTRICTIVE COMMITMENT. IN ANY CASE, THE DIFFERENCES ON THIS QUESTION SHOULD NOT COME IN THE WAY OF ENLARGING AND ENRICHING THE CONTENT AND SCOPE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IN DIVERSE FIELDS AS WELL AS IN OUR RESPECTIVE EFFORTS TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.

MAY I ALSO THANK YOU FOR THE VOLUMES ON THE WORKS OF THOREAU. I GREATLY LOOK FORWARD TO AN EARLY VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND HOPE, IN THE MEANWHILE, THAT WE CAN CONTINUE OUR DIALOGUE THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD.

PLEASE CONVEY ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US OUR GREETINGS TO
MRS. CARTER.
YOURS SINCERELY,
MORARJI DESAI

GOHEEN

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